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Consumer Price Index, Denver-Aurora-Lakewood area – March 2020

Area prices were down 0.3 percent over the past two months, up 2.2 percent from a year ago

Prices in the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood area, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), declined 0.3 percent for the two months ending in March 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Acting Regional Commissioner Susan Mendez noted that the March decrease was influenced by lower prices for gasoline. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, bi-monthly changes may reflect seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the CPI-U advanced 2.2 percent. The index for all items less food and energy advanced 2.5 percent over the year. Food prices rose 3.5 percent. Energy prices declined 5.9 percent, largely the result of a decrease in the price of gasoline. (See [table 1.](#))

Food

Food prices rose 0.5 percent for the two months ending in March. Prices for food at home increased 0.7 percent and prices for food away from home rose 0.3 percent for the same period.

Over the year, food prices were 3.5 percent higher. Prices for food at home advanced 2.5 percent since a year ago, and prices for food away from home rose 4.6 percent.

Energy

The energy index decreased 9.9 percent for the two months ending in March. The decrease was mainly due to lower prices for gasoline (-17.9 percent). Prices for household energy rose 0.3 percent during the period.

Energy prices declined 5.9 percent over the year, largely due to lower prices for gasoline (-9.7 percent). Lower prices for household energy costs (-3.1 percent) also contributed.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy edged up 0.1 percent in the latest two-month period. Higher prices for household furnishings and operations (1.4 percent) and used cars and trucks (3.5 percent) were mostly offset by lower prices for apparel (-2.2 percent) and recreation (-0.9 percent).

Over the year, the index for all items less food and energy advanced 2.5 percent. The largest contributor was higher costs for shelter, up 3.9 percent. Partly offsetting the increase was a price decline in apparel, down 2.1 percent.

The May 2020 Consumer Price Index for the Denver-Aurora-Lakewood area is scheduled to be released on June 10, 2020.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Impact on March 2020 Consumer Price Index Data

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) program suspended data collection by personal visit on March 16, 2020. When possible, data normally collected by personal visit were collected either online or by phone. Additionally, data collection in March was affected by the temporary closing or limited operations of certain types of establishments. These factors resulted in an increase in the number of prices being considered temporarily unavailable and imputed. While the CPI program attempted to collect as much data as possible, many indexes are based on smaller amounts of collected prices than usual, and a small number of indexes that are normally published were not published this month. Additional information is available at www.bls.gov/bls/effects-of-covid-19-pandemic-on-bls-price-indexes.htm#CPI.

Specific information about the impact of COVID-19 on March 2020 CPI data collection is available at www.bls.gov/cpi/additional-resources/covid19-statement-march-2020.htm.

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPIs for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 93 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers approximately 29 percent of the total population. The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Each month, prices are collected in 75 urban areas across the country from about 6,000 housing units and approximately 22,000 retail establishments—department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index.

The index measures price changes from a designated reference date (1982-84) that equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: the price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65. For further details see the CPI home page on the Internet at www.bls.gov/cpi and the BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 17, The Consumer Price Index, available on the Internet at www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch17.pdf.

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Because the sample size of a local area is smaller, the local area index is subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. As a result, local area indexes show greater

volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. **NOTE: Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices between cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.**

The Denver-Aurora-Lakewood metropolitan area is comprised of Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Clear Creek, Denver, Douglas, Elbert, Gilpin, Jefferson, and Park counties in Colorado.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from -		
	Jan. 2020	Feb. 2020	Mar. 2020	Mar. 2019	Jan. 2020	Feb. 2020
All items	270.952	-	270.120	2.2	-0.3	-
All items (1967 = 100)	903.511	-	900.737			
Food and beverages	242.719	-	244.077	3.3	0.6	-
Food	247.322	-	248.649	3.5	0.5	-
Food at home	231.878	231.851	233.571	2.5	0.7	0.7
Cereals and bakery products	282.871	-	287.542	3.4	1.7	-
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs	220.009	-	220.630	0.7	0.3	-
Dairy and related products	197.713	-	210.851	6.5	6.6	-
Fruits and vegetables	279.807	-	283.304	3.8	1.2	-
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)	171.888	-	165.556	7.2	-3.7	-
Other food at home	206.141	-	206.572	-0.4	0.2	-
Food away from home	267.315	-	268.061	4.6	0.3	-
Alcoholic beverages	202.511	-	204.211	0.6	0.8	-
Housing	274.823	-	275.783	3.7	0.3	-
Shelter	319.992	320.236	320.507	3.9	0.2	0.1
Rent of primary residence	332.516	331.652	331.938	2.8	-0.2	0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2)	313.471	314.018	314.335	4.0	0.3	0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)	313.471	314.018	314.335	4.0	0.3	0.1
Fuels and utilities	236.793	-	238.806	-0.6	0.9	-
Household energy	153.476	153.329	153.931	-3.1	0.3	0.4
Energy services	152.094	152.007	152.051	-3.5	0.0	0.0
Electricity	157.806	157.806	157.806	0.2	0.0	0.0
Utility (piped) gas service	-	-	-	-	-	-
Household furnishings and operations	120.325	-	122.063	4.2	1.4	-
Apparel	96.074	-	93.915	-2.1	-2.2	-
Transportation	258.982	-	248.810	-2.0	-3.9	-
Private transportation	256.162	-	247.474	-1.2	-3.4	-
New and used motor vehicles(3)	107.334	-	107.315	-1.7	0.0	-
New vehicles(1)	221.630	-	218.890	-1.3	-1.2	-
Used cars and trucks(1)	264.693	-	274.038	1.7	3.5	-
Motor fuel	215.576	201.059	177.553	-9.6	-17.6	-11.7
Gasoline (all types)	213.871	199.249	175.609	-9.7	-17.9	-11.9
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4)	206.082	191.561	167.896	-10.3	-18.5	-12.4
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5)	216.053	202.592	183.284	-6.3	-15.2	-9.5
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4)	241.517	227.397	205.384	-7.1	-15.0	-9.7
Motor vehicle insurance(1)	2,995.891	-	3,026.695	5.9	1.0	-
Medical care	625.416	-	629.157	2.1	0.6	-
Recreation(3)	163.897	-	162.493	0.5	-0.9	-
Education and communication(3)	123.687	-	124.328	0.8	0.5	-
Tuition, other school fees, and childcare(1) ...	1,086.721	-	1,087.858	2.3	0.1	-
Other goods and services	373.601	-	380.429	4.5	1.8	-
Commodity and service group						
Commodities	175.156	-	173.034	1.6	-1.2	-
Commodities less food and beverages	141.523	-	138.278	0.5	-2.3	-
Nondurables less food and beverages	169.790	-	161.498	-2.9	-4.9	-
Durables	112.221	-	112.736	4.3	0.5	-
Services	356.266	-	356.868	2.5	0.2	-
Special aggregate indexes						
All items less shelter	247.665	-	246.231	1.2	-0.6	-
All items less medical care	254.850	-	253.849	2.2	-0.4	-
Commodities less food	143.944	-	140.845	0.6	-2.2	-

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) - Continued

Item and Group	Indexes			Percent change from -		
	Jan. 2020	Feb. 2020	Mar. 2020	Mar. 2019	Jan. 2020	Feb. 2020
Nondurables	206.226	-	202.243	0.4	-1.9	-
Nondurables less food.....	171.962	-	164.380	-2.6	-4.4	-
Services less rent of shelter(2).....	403.510	-	404.224	0.7	0.2	-
Services less medical care services.....	333.059	-	333.495	2.4	0.1	-
Energy	180.967	173.993	163.129	-5.9	-9.9	-6.2
All items less energy	280.513	-	281.053	2.6	0.2	-
All items less food and energy	287.357	-	287.767	2.5	0.1	-

Footnotes

(1) Indexes on a January 1978=100 base.

(2) Indexes on a November 1982=100 base.

(3) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

(4) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

(5) Index on a December 1993=100 base.

- Data not available.